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June 14, 1977

The Tachai Campaign in China

STATINTL

I. [REDACTED] a continuing priority problem in the Peoples Republic of China is the production of enough food to feed its growing population. Today I want to discuss how Chinese leaders have turned to a massive campaign of exhortation and publicity to expand food output. This campaign is epitomized by the slogan: "In agriculture, learn from Tachai" (pronounced as: Da jai).

- A. Tachai is a small village located in a hilly, traditionally impoverished area in North China (see Graphic 1). When and if you travel to China, Mr. President, Tachai is one of the places the Chinese are likely to invite you to visit.
- B. Its fame derives from its agricultural achievements. Since 1954 grain output (corn, millet, and sorghum) has risen from 2 tons to about 8 tons per hectare, on land that produces only a single crop annually, or at most three crops every 2 years. (By comparison, even the planning goal for grain output in the

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southermost provinces of China, where two or three crops, principally rice, are harvested annually, is only 6 tons per hectare.)

- C. The propaganda of the campaign constantly attributes the high production levels at Tachai to a correct political attitude and, consequently, Tachai has become a model for emulation and has developed into an agricultural demonstration area (see Graphic 2).
- D. National agricultural conferences held in the fall of 1975 and in December 1976 were built around the "learn from Tachai" theme. Specific targets set forth at these conferences are to transform one-third of the nation's 2,200 counties into advanced, Tachai-type units, and to achieve basic mechanization of agriculture by 1980. The Chinese claim that 100 additional counties achieved Tachai status during 1976.

II. National agricultural development policies symbolized by Tachai and designed to increase yields include:

- A. A range of common sense practices emphasizing soil and water conservation measures, irrigation and drainage projects, land reclamation, and enlargement of field size to increase irrigation capability and

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permit use of farm machinery.

B. The mechanization of agricultural tasks through use of locally manufactured labor-saving tools and machines (see Graphic 3).

1. Mechanization is viewed as freeing labor for other tasks--particularly where attempts are being made to squeeze in an extra crop during the growing season and to expand rural industry.

C. Continued emphasis on scientific farming practices--the adoption of high-yield varieties of seed, greater use of organic and inorganic fertilizers, and expansion of multiple-cropping practices.

D. Increased output from forestry, animal husbandry, and fisheries.

E. Greater attention to poorer rural areas, where economic inequalities could foster discontent.

III. As you know, Mr. President, economic programs in China are combined with ideological commitments, and the Tachai campaign has long range political goals.

A. Concern has been voiced over the extent of traditional private enterprise activities and the "spontaneous" tendencies toward capitalism among some peasants.

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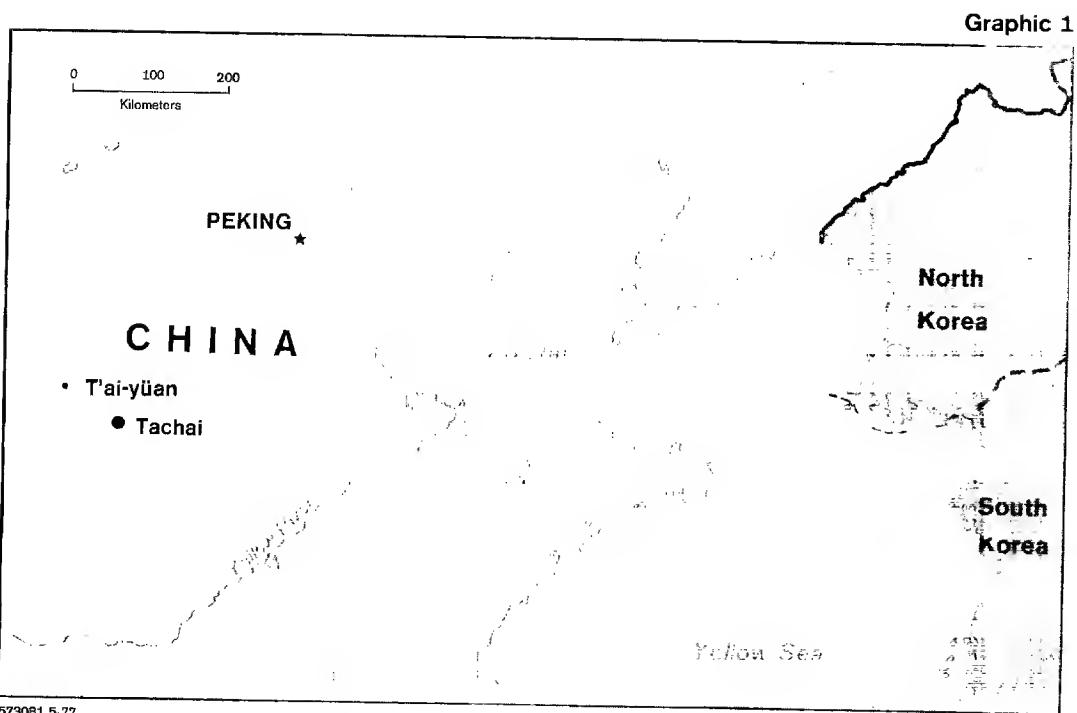
B. Hence considerable emphasis is placed on political attitudes and adherence to the party line by local leaders so that they may educate the peasantry on the benefits of socialism.

C. The Tachai blueprint calls for eventual organizational and social changes. Although the campaign does not envisage a rapid overturning of present rural life patterns, there are possible problems.

1. Mass mobilization to improve land conditions, for instance, interferes with the traditional slow pace of life during the winter slack season. Moves to increase grain output also reduce the time available for profitable side activities such as fruit growing, duck raising, and brick making.

D. Other, more serious problems could affect the very reasons for pressing the Tachai campaign. For instance, as the growing season is extended by multiple-cropping practices, the impact of unfavorable weather (e.g., early or late frosts) becomes greater, and the actual production gain from intensified cropping may be lessened or may go unrealized.

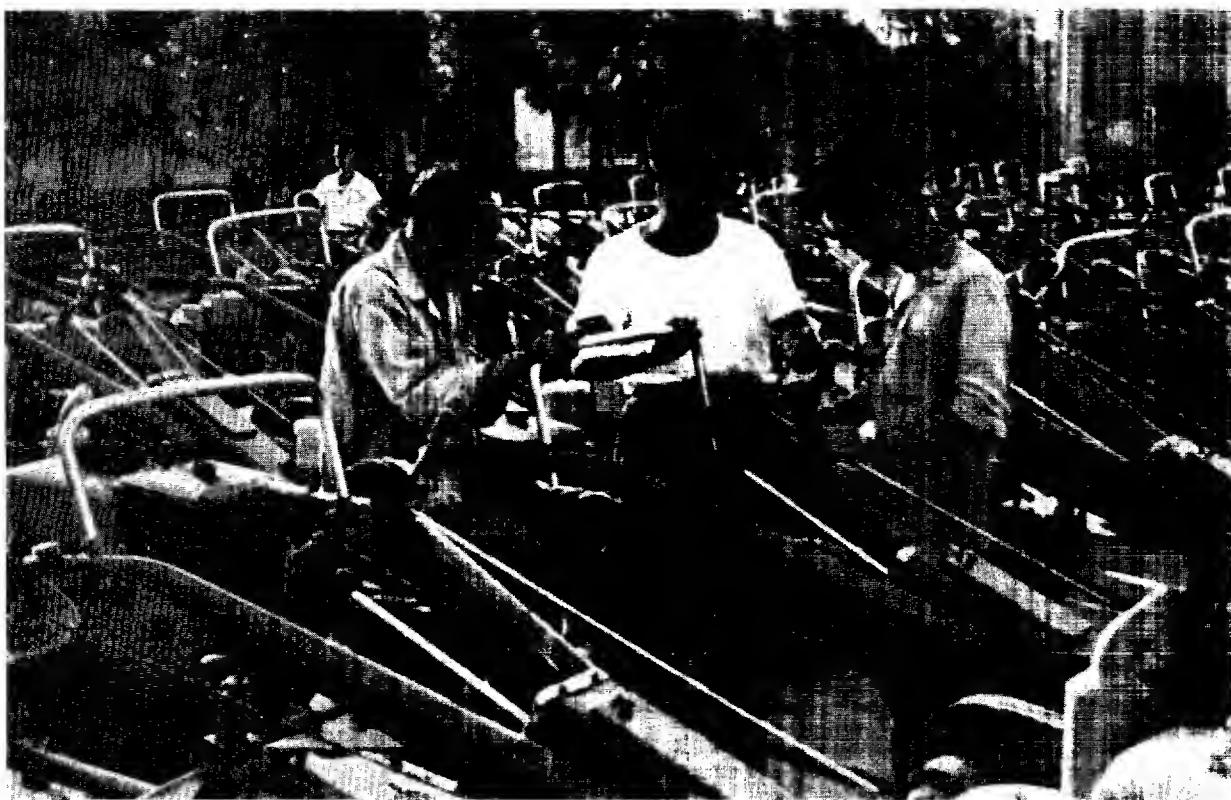
1. The expansion of rural industry to support agricultural mechanization, moreover, may lead to competing demands by local and national industries for scarce material resources.





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Graphic 3. Tachai has been developed into an agricultural demonstration area complete with accommodations capable of handling several thousand visitors a day.



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Graphic 3. Hand tractors and other simple farm machinery are designed to free some of China's farm workers for other agricultural and rural industry tasks.